

**Australia
mini-tour for
Execution,
Texas: 1987
with Jennifer
Natalya Fink:**

**- Hares and
Hyenas
Bookshop,
Melbourne**

**- University
of Melbourne**

**-
Darlinghurst
Bookshop,
Sydney**

**Word is Out
presents
d. travers scott
jennifer natalya fink**



Sunday 9 July – 8:30pm

Writer and editor **D Travers Scott** is the author of the highly acclaimed novel *Execution Texas: 1987*, and the editor of *Strategic Sex* and *Best Gay Erotica 2000*. Scott's writings on sex, culture and performance art have appeared in dozens of anthologies and periodicals. **Jennifer Natalya Fink** is the author of *The Mikveh Queen* and *Burn*, co-editor of *Performing Hybridity*, a contributor to *Strategic Sex* and has recently worked on children's books with Hillary Clinton and Susan Sarandon.

**DON'T MISS THESE EXCITING
NEW QUEER VOICES.**

"Smart, sexy, and full of surprises, D Travers Scott's *Strategic Sex* is wilder than a roomful of drunken sailors." **Steve Zeeland**

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HARES & HYENAS

ANGELRAT

MICHELLE HESPE speaks with performance artist, essayist and author, D.Travers Scott, about his novel, *Execution Texas: 1987*.

"The town's name unnerved her, but like midnight coyote wails and many other things Western, it also reassured. The week she arrived in Execution, she took her boy to the public hanging of a murderer. She wanted to see the town live up to its name.

My grandfather's eyes gleamed as he passed on this heirloom memory. Certain details focused his mind, pulled him from his cloud of drink and prescriptions ... as if the past helped him engage the present."

D.Travers Scott has written a novel that is rooted in country where the traditional novel and the common linear narrative dare not tread. Yet like the white waters of a raging river, it cuts through the parched, barren soils of Texan terrain, drowning any assumption that contemporary writing means a lack of literary credence.

Travers tells me about the grandfather, the memory of whom opens the novel: "He was a romantic, literary soul – but his addictions killed that side of him, or made it difficult to express. He never fulfilled his dreams and so carried around a lot of disappointment and bitterness before his death. My memory of him has made me even more determined to pursue my dreams. I don't want to live with the burden of unrealised dreams."

And as "the past helped him to engage the present", Travers has used the violent frontier of a past Texas as a canvas for life in the late eighties, in the town of Execution. Pivoted upon the life of Seeger, and his circle of friends in their late teens, *Execution, Texas: 1987*, chronicles rocky teenage rites of passage – with smart ass humour and wit as dry as the land. And of course, sex, drugs and rock and roll crop up as often as cacti in the desert.

There are always scenes in a novel that stay with you. I ask Travers about his Angelrat. He laughs. He tells me that editors and initial readers strongly encouraged him to remove the scene that has excited the largest reaction: Seeger, having downed a magic mushroom potion, trips out in his hotel room where he and his mother (who is, pointedly, a big believer in the alternative child-rearing practices of the '70s) are staying while on a holiday in Mexico.

"A winged rat flew in close, brandishing albino feathers with muscular abandon ... It's incarnadine, veiny ears ballooned out, transforming into a translucent graduate's cap. 'Classtine!' the Angelrat roared. His bat wings which unfurled into an Oxford gown. The blanket folds swelled up, meeting and melding to form a vast amphitheatre with Seeger in the front row."

Angelrat launches into a lecture upon sex, exclusively for the benefit of Seeger. Considering Travers' impressive resumé, crowded with essays and the editing of pieces any sex therapist would find absorbing and challenging, the lecture reads like a scene in a hilarious black comedy. Yet for all its far out absurdity, the lecture seems to be based in expertly expressed truths and

like Seeger, the reader becomes unsure as to what is drug induced psycho-babble and what segments have roots of fact.

Says Travers:

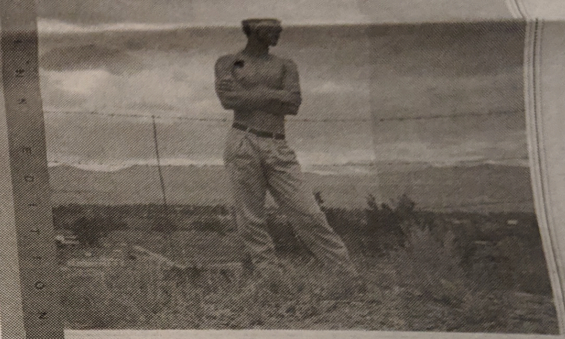
"I wanted the reader to be transported beyond the narrative. Narratives can so often impose hermetic, enclosed worlds. I also wanted to throw into question the authority of the voices – of both myself as an author, and the characters, and the actual story. This can lead to a random questioning of belief... if you follow the narrative through, there are elements that are just not right. This also helps to demonstrate the intensity of Seeger's experience."

Travers also has an impressive resumé when it comes to performance art. His work in both this field and writing being highly regarded in America and internationally. I ask if he considers himself a gay activist.

"I haven't been involved in demonstrations for years. I hope the ideas raised in my work says enough, if not more.

EXECUTION, TEXAS: 1987

A NOVEL



D. TRAVERS SCOTT

I sneak the ideas in there. I hope that my work will assist with the changes and evolution needed in the world when it comes to issues of sexuality."

What are those changes that need to be made? I ask.

"I would like to see a broader focus, more emphasis on self-determination. Get rid of that American fear of the body for one. I want people to feel that they can love who they want, how they want. There needs to be a freedom of the heart and sexuality – instead of an emphasis on rights," He snorts in amusement.

"I mean, rights for gays to marry, rights for gays to be accepted into powerful positions, and the military forces, these things are not my top priority. The achievement of rights so that you can be like everybody else does not sit right with me. I don't want to be like everybody else! Being given the right to be like everyone else does not interest me. I am much more interested in the division between what is normal, and what is perverted. Nice, middle-class gay men with equal rights do not interest me. I am more interested in perversity than the middle-class, nice gay man."

D. Travers Scott will speak at 6pm on Wednesday 19 July at La Bar.

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Jennifer Natalya Fink (Strategic Sex)

and Sydney writer

Neal Drinnan (Glove Puppet / Pussy's Bow / Quill)

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Enquiries: Marion M. Campbell, Dept. of English, University of Melbourne,
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Queer Pens

Queer authors D Travers Scott (pictured) and Jennifer Natalya Fink will make an appearance at Hares and Hyenas for a reading. Scott is the author of the highly acclaimed novel *Execution Texas* and the editor of *Strategic Sex* and *Best Gay Erotica 2000*. Fink is the author of *The Mikveh Queen* and *Burn*, and has recently worked on children's books with Hillary Clinton and Susan Sarandon. At Hares & Hyenas, 135 Commercial Road, South Yarra on Sunday, July 9 at 6.30pm. The event is free and wheelchair accessible, book on 9824 0110.